

grammes of both squadrons. Each C.O., of course, retains direct responsibility for the organization and efficiency of his own unit.

On the maintenance side, the new Group Central Maintenance System is now in force. Under this scheme a First-Line Servicing Unit, staffed by semi-skilled ratings, performs daily inspections and minor repairs. All skilled personnel are on the strength of the Second-Line Servicing Unit, which deals with periodic inspections and the more complicated repairs. An appreciable saving in skilled manpower has been effected by this innovation.

The Group is administered by a Committee under the "chairmanship" of the A.G.C., and including the Group's second-in-command, the Group Engineer Officer and the Group Staff Officer. At this level all questions of maintenance and general organization are discussed.

A relatively little known, but now vitally important, component attached to the Group is the Carrier-Borne Air Liaison Section (C.B.A.L.) which, on paper at least, has an establishment of one major, a captain, a sergeant, and one other-rank, from the Army and/or Royal Marines. To this Section, headed by Captain J. Pulley, falls the task of acquainting the Naval pilots, observers and air crewmen with the requirements of land forces in respect of tactical reconnaissance, gunnery spotting,

and close support. In a landing operation, supported by Naval air squadrons, an officer of the C.B.A.L. would go ashore with the first assault wave and, having established contact with the Air Group, would ensure that the aircraft were directed with maximum benefit to the forces engaged in the land battle. Thus the C.A.G. is a fully competent army-co-operation unit.

Current commitments of the C.A.G. visited are best introduced by a brief history. The Group was formed, with Lt. Cdr. G. R. Callingham as A.G.C., late in 1946, and



was equipped with one squadron of Firefly Is and one of Seafires XVIs. After a period of working-up at Eglinton in Northern Ireland, the Group embarked in H.M.S. *Theseus*, and left during February last year on a memorable cruise which took them to Ceylon, the Nicobar and Andaman Islands, Penang, Singapore, Tasmania, New Zealand, Australia, the Solomon Islands, and finally to Hong Kong, where four weeks were spent in almost continuous flying from the deck and from shore bases. In Australia the Fireflies and Seafires gave a number of displays, and in the Solomons were able to quell labour troubles without recourse to any more deadly weapon than the businesslike note of their Griffon engines. On its return to England last December the Group was disbanded,

LIKE a shoal of fish, Firefly IVs of No. 812 Squadron are seen on the opposite page at the start of a 270-knot dive, 8,000ft over Hampshire. Below, the same machines are in company with the Seafire 47s of No. 804 Squadron. Both pictures are the result of teamwork by "Flight's" photographer and his pilot—Lt. Cdr. F. Stovin-Bradford, D.S.C., R.N. The Seafire on the right is taking off from Cudrose on a recent exercise.

